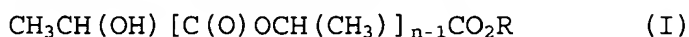


CLAIMS

1. A composition comprising a mixture of monoalkyl and polyalkyl lactyllactates of formula:



in which R represents an alkyl radical containing a number of carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 4 and n is an integer equal to 2, 3 or 4.

2. The composition as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that the alkyl radical is a methyl, ethyl, isopropyl or n-butyl radical.
3. The composition as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the alkyl radical is an ethyl radical.
4. The composition as claimed in one of claims 1 to 3, characterized in that it comprises:
- 35 to 85 parts by weight of alkyl lactyllactate (n = 2 in formula (I)), AL₂ below;
 - 10 to 60 parts by weight of alkyl dilactyllactate (n = 3 in formula (I)), AL₃ below; and
 - 1 to 20 parts by weight of alkyl trilactyllactate (n = 4 in formula (I)), AL₄ below;
- AL₂ + AL₃ + AL₄ representing 100 parts by weight.
5. The composition as claimed in one of claims 1 to 4, characterized in that it also contains an alkyl lactate of formula CH₃CH(OH)CO₂R (II) in which R

has the same meaning as in formula (I), in a proportion of from 0.1 to 1 part by weight per 100 parts by weight of the mixture $AL_2 + AL_3 + AL_4$.

6. The composition as claimed in one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that it also contains polyalkyl lactyllactates (I) in which n is greater than 4, in a proportion of from 0.1 to 4 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of the mixture $AL_2 + AL_3 + AL_4$.
7. The use of a composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, as an agent for cleaning and/or degreasing metallic components.
8. The use of a composition as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, also containing at least one solvent, as an agent for cleaning and/or degreasing metallic components.
9. The use as claimed in claim 8, characterized in that the solvent is n-butyl butoxypropionate.